



SUMMARY OF CAMBRIDGE AHEAD RESPONSE TO THE GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP “MAKING CONNECTIONS” CONSULTATION

Cambridge Ahead’s membership includes 48 of the largest employers in Cambridge and the surrounding region, representing a collective workforce of over 40,000 people. We are committed to the sustainable and inclusive growth of Cambridge over the long-term.

The Cambridge Ahead (CA) response to the “Making Connections” consultation centres on our analysis of the role of the city’s transport system on our overall objective to improve and enhance quality of life for all. Our response also reflects our support for the recommendations made by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate.

Our response was developed following extensive engagement with our member organisations, including a comprehensive survey.

All respondents to our survey of members supported the need for a new package of measures, above and beyond the status quo. There was widespread support for a city access package based upon the consultation put forward by the GCP, with crucial principles and features put forward by Cambridge Ahead to be incorporated into the next phase of detailed development.

To achieve our ambitions for sustainable and inclusive growth, any city access package must be effective in:

- **Prioritising road space** to enable significantly greater levels of active travel and public transport on our network.
- **Creating affordable and viable alternatives** to private car usage in the city centre.
- Enabling the future **development of a business case for rapid mass transit systems** to meet the long-term needs of the city.

Further principles we propose to be incorporated as part of the package are put forward:

- Absolute clarity that **any revenue generated will be hypothecated directly back into the transport system** in a transparent way. Those who live and work in the city region must be able to see the direct link between city access measures and investment in quicker and more frequent transport services.
- **Broadening the current plans so that revenue generation is utilised to fund a range of services which support the network.** Engagement with our membership has shown widespread support for the proposals set out within the consultation for a transformed bus network. However, it is also a principle of our response that the GCP should actively look at a broader set of options in the next phase of design. There are a range of other transport modes (both established and emerging) which can, and should, play a role in an enhanced public and active transport offer.
- **Development of an interoperable system** where information sharing between different modes is openly exchanged to create a seamless travel experience for residents and visitors to the city. Cambridge should develop an innovative and data led smart transport system that meets the scale of our ambition to be the greatest small city in the world.
- **Assurance that improved public transport alternatives are in place 12-months in advance of any charging regime being introduced.** This should be alongside clear communication and integrated journey planning from the GCP for individuals and organisations ahead of implementation of any charges, in order that alternative travel arrangements can be well established in advance.

- **Ensure that people feel safe when using preferred transport modes.** This includes helping people feel safe and secure when walking or cycling in city as well as when using public transport modes and relates both to physical security and hygiene measures to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Any charges are fair and benefits and impacts equitably spread,** so that implementation does not further disadvantage any particular groups who have less choice and rely most on the system.
- **Recognise that many people will need to drive for part of their journey.** It is the final legs of journeys into the city that we need to prioritise offering better alternatives for.
- **Incremental adoption of the package that is finally agreed,** so that it can be built outwards as lessons and impact are learned through implementation and changing travel patterns.
- **Modal filters which prioritise pedestrians, bikes and scooters are part of the solution** and should be considered for use in parts of the city in a way which is complementary to a charging scheme.
- **Include a proactive plan for freight alongside passenger transport.**
- **Any road pricing scheme should be developed as a concept that could be scaled and replicated by Government across other parts of the country.** Different road pricing schemes in different parts of the country create a disjointed and unsustainable user experience.

The development of a business case for a Rapid Mass Transit System

Consultation with our membership shows support for the point that the development of a business case for a Rapid Mass Transit System (RMT) should be considered by the GCP and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

A significant concern articulated by employers in Cambridge is that the strategic transport plan for the city must be designed to deal in a sustainable way with the growth predicted for Cambridge and the high volumes of future passengers which any public transport system must be able to handle seamlessly to ensure the continued success of the city. The existing Local Plan anticipates some 40,000 new jobs in Cambridge in the next 10 years alone, and more in the years beyond that.

Whilst post-pandemic travel patterns may mitigate some of Cambridge's congestion challenges (but cannot yet be relied upon to do so), current data suggests the city must go significantly further than this shift to achieve the targets set by the Commission on Climate. The exploration of the business case for RMT therefore is crucial, to understand if the currently proposed City Access measures and other exiting transport plans will be enough, over the long-term, to provide a sustainable transport system that effectively connects Greater Cambridge to surrounding communities.

We also emphasise the need for the GCP to bring forward infrastructure, including four corridor schemes, in a way that is future proofed and adaptable to future transport systems.

What funding mechanism should be prioritised in order to improve public transport, walking, and cycling?

The majority of CA members we have consulted with favour a flexible charge for road use, potentially based on the busiest use times. A pollution charge was the second most favoured option and parking charges, including a Workplace Parking Levy, the least popular option.

Latest available data around changes in travel patterns and road usage due to the pandemic should be carefully considered in the design of any charging scheme. "Peak" travel times may have changed and are presently reaching lower peaks than they did pre-Covid. Some workers now have more flexibility in choosing when they travel.